Impostor

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Impostor

by margot16

Summary

Two meet under the most improbable of circumstances, but only one leaves. Soon the end will come.

Ryuko Matoi stood at the precipice of one of the greatest and most tragic spectacles she had ever witnessed.

Standing on the great marble steps of the Courthouse of Commons, Ryuko (though she wasn't known by that name here) looked across the sea of hundreds of thousands of roiling, grieving masses filling Royalty Square to the brim and beyond. Her black suit fit her perfectly, hiding the obvious aspects of her feminine form, making her the picture of lithe masculinity as she peered over the checked scarf wrapped around the lower half of her face and neck.

Hundreds of feet in front of and below her, the slow procession of ornate beauty and tragic sadness cut its way slowly through the throngs of onlookers on its way to the Royal Mausoleum. At its center, a casket of pure onyx that seemed to suck any light into it like a black hole. Arranged around the casket in two straight lines was the King's Guard: massive eight foot tall soldiers with a man's mind but the heart of a machine, swathed in deepest red with their spears turned downward in a sign of respect. At the casket's head was the royal family, the King in all his regal splendor followed by the Prince and Princess, heaving with dry, hollow sobs and dwarfed by the King's magnanimous presence.

In the casket: Queen Satsuki. First of her name and, though the public would never know, victim of her own hand.

As the casket began the slow march into the grand golden doors of the mausoleum, Ryuko tugged downward at the brim of her black hat and reflected on that fateful night in the Queen's service. A night that had begun in the most forbidden of trysts and had ended, to Ryuko's frustration, in utter disappointment. Stealing from the palace as quickly and quietly as she had come, Ryuko had to stifle a growl of extreme frustration. The face that she had seen across so much time and through so many different worlds had once again eluded her, and by the following morning "Queen" Satsuki had taken her own life.

This was yet another world in which one of them was fated to die, but Ryuko was determined that despite the fact that she seemed to be fated to watch different versions of her beloved shuffle off one mortal coil after another, at least once she was bound for success.

As the great golden doors to the Royal Mausoleum closed and the crying wails of subjects went up from around Ryuko and down into the crowded square, she quickly took advantage

of the moment to tug her hat even further down on her head and slip unnoticed into the darkened Courthouse, away from the prying eyes of thousands. As Ryuko paced the halls for an office or storeroom that was both open and empty, she cursed this rotten world that somehow had not invented cigarettes yet.

Finally able to find sancutary, Ryuko swept quietly into the grandiose office of some parliamentary judge or another. Feeling around in her breast pocket, Ryuko fished an ornate timepiece out and held it aloft in front of her face, thinking one last time of Queen Satsuki's porcelain-white skin and melancholy smile. Her heart softened for a bit, until a slightly more recent memory struck her like a bolt from the blue.

"I think it's time for you to leave, *sir*." Satsuki said, the resignation in her voice plain.

I think you're right. Ryuko thought, gritting her teeth and depressing a pad on the timepiece's backplate.

A flash of white, and it was like she had never existed at all.

In fact, that's exactly how it was.

On to the next, she thought.

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